



BLUFFTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Disciplinary Action Report

1 of 4

Member/Employee Name/ID #: Selena NelsonDate: 10/25/2018Rank: OfficerDivision: Patrol**YOU ARE HEREBY CHARGED WITH VIOLATING:****Code of Conduct 10.0**

Section 8.1- All employees of the Department shall conduct themselves in a professional manner while on duty and off. Any conduct that brings the Department into disrepute, or reflects discredit upon the officer as an employee of the Department, or that which impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or officer is Conduct Unbecoming and subject to disciplinary action.

Section 10.1- Department employees shall be courteous and professional in their dealings with the public. They shall not use abusive, violent, profane or insulting language or gestures and will attempt to remain calm, regardless or provocation.

Section 10.2- Employees will use tact and exercise patience and discretion while in the performance of their job assignment.

Section 11.4- Any course of conduct that indicates an employee of the department has little or no proper regard for his/her obligations as an employee of the Bluffton Police Department will be deemed misconduct and will be grounds for dismissal.

Section 18.1(B) and SOP# 20 XII B- Request for approval for outside employment- Employees shall submit a written request for off-duty employment to the Chief of Police and the Town Manager whose approval must be granted prior to engaging in such employment.

(Attach additional sheets as necessary)

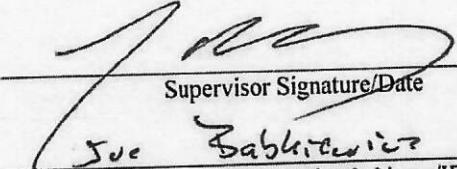
FACTS:

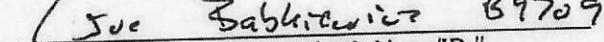
The violation(s) occurred on or about: October 12, 2018, Selena Nelson violated Code of Conduct 8.0 and 10.0, specifically 8.1, 10.1, 10.2, and 11.4 to wit: while currently working as a Patrol Officer with Team A Officer Selena Nelson was dispatched to a an animal complaint. While dealing with the owners of the animals (Mr. and Mrs. Comeau), Officer Nelson escalated the incident. Officer Nelson implied that if they were to leave their animals in the vehicle again they would come back to broken windows to their vehicle. This statement caused Mr. Comeau to become agitated after this statement was made. Officer Nelson then advised Mrs. Comeau that she could not drive because her tolerance for alcohol was lower than her husbands. Officer Nelson advised Mrs. Comeau that her husbands tolerance is higher and he needs to make the decision whether he should drive or not. While out on the scene with Mr. and Mrs. Comeau, Officer Nelson failed to remain courteous and professional. After clearing the scene, Officer Nelson then informed another officer that she was waiting for Mr. and Mrs. Comeau to pull out because they were intoxicated. Officer Nelson made no effort to assist Mr. and Mrs. Comeau while at the scene in determining if they were capable of operating a motor vehicle. Officer Hopkins later stopped Mr. Comeau and arrested him for DUI. Officer Nelson did not use tact or patience when dealing with Mr. and Mrs. Comeau. These actions by Officer Nelson has reflected discredit upon herself and the Bluffton Police Department.

The violation of Code of Conduct Section 18.1b and SOP # 20 XIIB- occurred in July 2018 to wit: Officer Nelson began working as a courtesy officer for Hampton Lakes Apartments prior to approval from the Town Manager and Chief of Police. The approval for this secondary employment did not occur until October 17, 2018.

Bluffton Police Department · 101 Progressive Street · PO Box 386 · Bluffton, SC 29910 · Phone: 843-706-4550 · Fax: 843-757-2269

(Attach additional sheets as necessary)


Supervisor Signature/Date


Sue Zabliwicki

Print or Type Supervisor's Name/ID #

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In signing this report I acknowledge that I have received a copy. I understand that I may respond in writing and that such response will be made a part of this Report and taken into consideration prior to a final determination being made.


Member/Employee Signature/Date

10/24/2018

FINAL ACTION

Termination of Employment

effective 10/26/18

FINAL APPROVAL


Chief Chapman/Date

The original document is to be forwarded to the Internal Affairs Office, with the affected member/employee receiving a copy.
NO OTHER COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE MADE

Robinson, Katherine

To: Robinson, Katherine
Subject: Selena Nelson

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Record of Actions for file to support Termination of Selena Nelson

Subject: Selena Nelson

This email will set out the recent background that lead to the termination action.

On October 12, 2018 Officer Nelson encountered Mr. and Mrs. Comeau (the dog owners) during an investigation of two canines being locked in a vehicle. She arrived on scene and admitted that the canines were not in distress. In talking with the owners of the dogs, Nelson escalated a situation that could have been easily resolved in a professional manner. While talking to the couple, Nelson implied that if they left the dogs in the car again they would find their windows smashed out when they returned to their car. In doing so, she created a confrontational setting that was unnecessary. These comments are captured on her body worn camera. This unacceptable behavior violates the Bluffton Police Departments Code of Conduct in the way we deal and interact with citizens.

Nelson then left and responded to another call. Nelson had a conversation with Officer Hopkins and implied that Mr. and Mrs. Comeau were drunk and they were going to drive away from the restaurant. She apparently described the car with the intent that a stop would result in a DUI.

Mr. Comeau is eventually stopped by another officer for a routine traffic violation (crossing the center line) after being followed and observed for several miles. He was given a field sobriety test and arrested for DUI. Once taken to the BPD where he was given a breathalyzer test he registered a 0.00. He was then charged with DUI and taken to jail. The blood test subsequently also came back at 0.0. Chief Chapman reviewed the video of the stop and did not see any failure of the field sobriety tests.

This type of behavior is not an isolated incident. On June 10, 2018 Nelson was involved in a traffic stop with Officer Odom as the secondary officer. During this incident she spoke with a family member of the suspect and escalated the situation by being unprofessional and abrupt, telling the driver of the vehicle "to watch his mouth" and "there is no need for you to be on our traffic stop". This is another example of an unprofessional attitude in dealing with the public and conduct unbecoming of a Bluffton Police Officer. This incident was captured on her body worn camera.

Specific violations of Bluffton Police Department Policy include:

Code of Conduct #043

Sections

8.1 All employees of the Department shall conduct themselves in a professional manner while on duty and off. Any conduct that brings the Department in to disrepute or reflects discredit upon the officer as an employee of the Department, or that which impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or officer is Conduct Unbecoming and subject to disciplinary action.

10.1 Department employees shall be courteous and professional in their dealings with the public. They shall not use abusive, violent, profane or insulting language or gestures and will attempt to remain calm, regardless of provocation.

11.4 Any course of conduct that indicates an employee of the Department has little or no proper regard for his/her obligations as an employee of the Bluffton Police Department will be deemed misconduct and will be grounds for dismissal.

In addition, Nelson applied for a position as a courtesy officer with Hampton Lake Apartments in July of 2018 and immediately began performing duties related to the position. She was not approved for off duty employment until October 4th, 2018. This is in violation of Off Duty and Outside Employment Policy.

During the pre-termination hearing, Ms. Nelson was given the opportunity to speak to the allegations. Her statements during that time contradicted what was observed on body worn cameras.

In reviewing Nelson's employment history with the Bluffton Police Department it appears that this type of behavior has developed into a pattern.

These types of actions will not be tolerated by officers employed with the Bluffton Police Department and therefore Ms. Nelson was terminated on October 26, 2018.

Katherine Robinson, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Human Resources Director
843-706-4517

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Town of Bluffton
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bluffton
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY



**BLUFFTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF'S MEMORANDUM
#18-038**

TO: All Police Personnel

FROM: Chris Chapman *CH*
Police Chief

RE: Officer Selena Nelson

DATE: October 26, 2018

Effective immediately, Officer Selena Nelson has been terminated from the Bluffton Police Department.